

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO ALL EC CAPITALS 3174
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
TELAVIV 859
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L EC BRUSSELS 01665

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EEC, XF, PFOR
SUBJECT: EURO/ARAB DIALOGUE: EC COMMISSION POST-MORTEM ON
GENERAL COMMISSION MEETING

REFS: (A) EC BRUSSELS 1480; (B) LONDON 2942; (C) DUBLIN
387; (D) TUNIS 1110

1. KLAUS MEYER, EC COMMISSION OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR
EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE, TOLD MISSION OFFICER THAT HE WAS
"RATHER CONTENT" WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE RECENT GENERAL
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COMMISSION MEETING IN TUNIS. ONCE THE ARABS GOT SOME
RATHER SHARP POLITICAL STATEMENT OFF THEIR CHESTS AT THE
OUTSET, MEYER FOUND THEY WERE COMPARATIVELY "RELAXED" ABOUT
FURTHER EFFORTS TO INJECT POLITICS INTO THE MEETING;
ACCORDINGLY THE POLITICAL DECIBEL LEVEL WAS FAR BELOW
THAT AT THE INITIAL COMMISSION MEETING IN LUXEMBOURG.
MEYER ATTRIBUTED THIS TO THE FACT THAT THE ARABS

REALIZED THEY WEREN'T GETTING ANY WHERE WITH THE EC IN OVER -PROSELYTIZING THEIR POLITICAL GOALS IN THE DIALOGUE. THE PLO REPRESENTATIVE HIMSELF TOLD MEYER THAT THE ARABS NOW APPRECIATED THE FACT THAT THE EC DELEGATION WAS UNABLE TO GO BEYOND STATEMENTS WHICH HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY AGREED JOINTLY BY THE NINE, AND THEREFORE AFTER MAKING THEIR INITIAL STATEMENTS, THEY WERE PREPARED TO LET THE ECONOMIC DISCUSSION PROCEED.

2. MEYER FURTHER OBSERVED THAT THE ARABS HAD NOT PRESSED FOR A FOREIGN MINISTER-LEVEL MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION THIS FALL, AND EXPRESSED SOME RELIEF THAT IN SCHEDULING THE GENERAL COMMISSION MEETING FOR SEPTEMBER IN BRUSSELS, THE EC SUCCEEDED IN AVOIDING THE ALGERIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE ARAB LEAGUE, WHICH IN LATE SEPTEMBER WOULD BE HELD BY THE SAUDIS. (ANOTHER COMMISSION OFFICIAL TOLD US THAT IN CORRIDOR CONVERSATIONS AT TUNIS THE ARABS SUGGESTED A FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING IN EARLY 1978, WITH EC REPLYING THE TWO SIDES SHOULD WAIT TO SEE WHETHER THERE IS SUFFICIENT PROGRESS IN THE DIALOGUE IN THE MONTHS AHEAD TO WARRANT SUCH A MEETING.)

3. NOT SURPRISINGLY, MEYER FELT THAT THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ASPECT OF THE MEETING WAS ARAB AGREEMENT TO CONTRIBUTE FUNDS TO PROJECT FEASIBILITY STUDIES. ASKED ABOUT THE NEXT STEP, MEYER SAID THAT AN AD HOC COMMITTEE UNDER THE DIALOGUE WOULD NOW GET TO WORK ON ESTABLISHING GUIDELINES FOR UTILIZATION OF THE ARAB

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AND ECFUNDS. THE COMMITTEE WILL REPORT ITS RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SEPTEMBER MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE; ONCE AGREEMENT IS ACHIEVED, IT WILL THEN BE POSSIBLE TO MOVE TO THE STAGE OF CONDUCTING FEASIBILITY STUDIES.

4. MEYER EMPHASIZED HOWEVER THAT THE ULTIMATE QUESTION OF FINANCING PROJECTS THEMSELVES IS STILL A LONG WAY OFF. THE EC, HE COMMENTED, WOULD BE ILL-ADVISED TO PRESS THE ARABS TOO SOON AND TOO FAST TO PROVIDE MORE MONEY FOR DIALOGUE PROJECTS. THE WHOLE PROCESS OF THE DIALOGUE IS SLOW ONE, HE OBSERVED, IN WHICH THE EC IS ATTEMPTING TO BUILD AND EXPAND ON LIMITED AREAS OF AGREEMENT. HE FEELS HOWEVER THAT TO AN INCREASING EXTENT THE NEEDY ARAB STATES ARE BECOMING AWARE OF THE DIALOGUE'S POTENTIAL FOR ASSISTING THEIR DEVELOPMENT GOALS, WHICH HE THOUGHT WAS A PRIME REASON FOR THE DEGREE OF PROGRESS ACHIEVED AT TUNIS. MORRIS

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